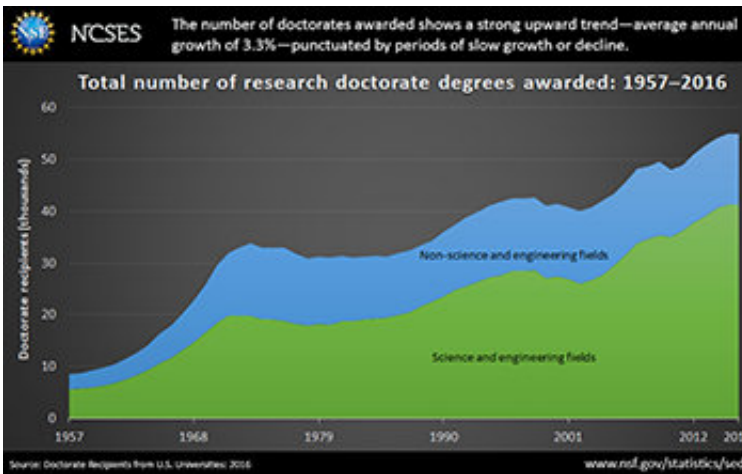


Number of doctorates awarded by US institutions in 2016 close to all-time high

April 6 2018



The Survey of Earned Doctorates provides data on the US system of doctoral education. Credit: NSF: Adrian Apodaca

U.S. institutions awarded 54,904 research doctorate degrees in 2016, only five fewer than the previous year's record high, according to the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED), a federally sponsored annual census of research degree recipients.

SED provides data for *Doctorate Recipients from U.S. Universities*, a [report](#) published by the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) within the National Science Foundation (NSF) that supplies data and analysis of the American system of doctoral education, a vital U.S. economic interest.

Since the SED began collecting data in 1957, the number of research doctorates awarded in science and engineering (S&E) fields has exceeded the number of non-S&E doctorates, and the gap is widening. In 1957, S&E doctorates made up 65 percent of all doctorates awarded. In 2016, S&E doctorates made up 75 percent.

The most recent SED includes the following findings:

- The largest share of doctorates awarded in 2016 was in the life sciences (nearly 23 percent), followed by engineering (17 percent), and psychology and the social sciences (16.5 percent). All fields of humanities and arts made up 10 percent of doctorates awarded.
- The time between students entering graduate school and receiving doctorates has fallen in all fields of study over the past 20 years, but, on average, it still takes years longer to earn a doctorate in non-S&E fields than in S&E fields.
- The number of S&E doctorates awarded to U.S. citizens and permanent residents grew 2 percent since 2015 and 39 percent since 2006. The number of doctorates in S&E fields awarded to temporary visa holders grew 2 percent since 2015 and 20 percent since 2006.
- The number of doctoral awards to temporary visa holders is highly concentrated—10 countries accounted for 71 percent of the doctorates awarded to temporary visa holders from 2006 to 2016. The top three countries—China, India and South Korea—accounted for 54 percent of the doctorates awarded to temporary visa holders.
- Women have earned a slight majority of all doctorates awarded to U.S. citizen and permanent residents each year since 2002, and women have earned more than 30 percent of all doctorates awarded to temporary [visa](#) holders over that period.
- From 1996 to 2016, the number of women earning degrees in

S&E fields increased by 84 percent.

- The [number](#) of doctorates awarded to blacks or African Americans who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents increased by 32 percent from 2006 to 2016. For the same period, the proportion of doctorates earned by Hispanics or Latinos increased by 67 percent.

For more information—including how much education-related debt [doctorate recipients](#) incur, what kind of employment they find and how much they earn—view the [report](#).

NCSES is the nation's leading provider of statistical data on the U.S. [science](#) and engineering enterprise.

Provided by National Science Foundation

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